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THE MASSINE BALLETS AT COVENT GARDEN

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The first issue, scheduled to appear in March, was delayed owing to production difficulties during the recent power cuts.

We are expecting that **No. 1** *will appear at the end of* **April,** *and readers are advised to place their orders with their newsagents now to avoid disappointment.*

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BALLET TODAY

Vol. I. No. 5 April-May, 1947

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

ALL pre-war ballet lovers were shocked and saddened by the news of the sudden death in New York, on January 28th, of Pearl Argyle. To newer audiences she was a name only, for she gave up her career when she married Curtis Bernhardt, the American film producer, in 1938: but she will always be associated with the early, formative years of English Ballet, to which she lent a unique distinction and grace. Frederick Ashton, many of whose first works were composed for her, writes of her on page 9. To her husband and her two small sons we send our most sincere sympathy.

It now seems definite that the American Ballet Theatre will have a second season at Covent Garden this July. This is splendid news, for they made many friends last year and London is faithful when its heart is won, as it undoubtedly was both by this Company and by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées who are now in New York.

Colonel de Basil was here for a brief visit during March to make arrangements for a spring season of the Hurok-de Basil Original Ballet Russe in association with Sir Thomas Beecham and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The theatre is not fixed at the time of writing, though it will probably be the Coliseum. Colonel de Basil seemed delighted to be back in London even for such a short visit. "Londres, c'est ma maison", he exclaimed, clasping both hands over his heart. He is very anxious to show this generation of balletomanes what he says is the only real Russian Ballet outside Russia. His company largely consists of dancers whom we have not seen in this country, but he affirms that his young Americans "dance the Russian way". It will be interesting to watch the reactions of the new audience to the repertoire which was once our staple ballet fare and interesting, too, for the old brigade to see whether these ballets stand the test of revival in a post-war world with what is virtually a new company. What is quite certain is that everyone will want to see Markova, who is said to be coming with him.

While deploring as much as anyone the over-adulatory demonstrations of some present-day balletomanes whose limited experience makes their opinions valueless, I also remember that I, too, was once a neophyte and that, wherever one begins, there is always a vast amount that one has necessarily missed. It is not very helpful to have perpetually flung in one's face, "But you ought to have seen ——", when one was throwing sponge cake over the side of one's high chair at the time. But balletomanes of the last and the present decade are now meeting on common ground with the revivals of two ballets by and with Leonide Massine, great choreographer, great dancer and great personality. Even so, the reactions of each must necessarily differ, so I asked Miss Pamela Black, editor of *Petit Tour*, bulletin of the London Ballet Circle, to give her impressions as representative of the young, intelligent ballet public which grew up during the war, and these appear alongside the review by Mary Clarke.

Two extra-ballet events of extreme interest took place during March. These were a lecture by Madame Rambert on Isadora Duncan and Anna Pavlova, and two performances of West African Dunia given by a group of young negroes at the Anglo-French Art Centre in St. John's Wood.

The lecture took place semi-privately on March 6th at the Royal Academy of Dancing. It seems to me so important that, though it was delivered extempore without a single note, I hope that Madame Rambert can be persuaded to give it again to a much larger audience. I can promise her that it was infinitely well worth the agonies which she declared she invariably suffers for at least a week before making a public speech. I had, perhaps, special personal reasons for being grateful for this talk. Although, like everyone else, I have read several books on Duncan, I never found that her art in any way "came alive" for me, not even through her own autobiography. The sensational and sometimes sordid details of her private life always got in the way of the clear picture I wanted so much to have of her and her work, and none of the photographs were very helpful. But when Madame Rambert described her reclining on the ground in her loose Greek tunic, playing knuckle-stones to the music of Gluck, suddenly she did come alive for me, and I knew at last why she was acclaimed a genius. As to Pavlova, I suppose I am one of the few balletomanes of my generation who made their first acquaintance with Ballet not through Pavlova but via the Diaghilev Ballet. I do not know why this was, but I had already two seasons of Russian Ballet behind me before I ever saw Pavlova. That meant that I was experienced enough to be shocked by her surroundings but not experienced enough to be able to forgive her the rubbish because of what she herself was. I am glad to remember that

(*Continued on page* 12)

MASSINE AT COVENT GARDEN

By MARY CLARKE

IT is obvious that the quality of a ballet company can be judged only by the results as seen on the stage, and those results are in direct proportion to the ability of the choreographer or producer responsible for realising them. It is on the personal contact between choreographer and company—on the power of the one to explain and inspire and of the other to understand and respond—that the successful realisation of any ballet depends.

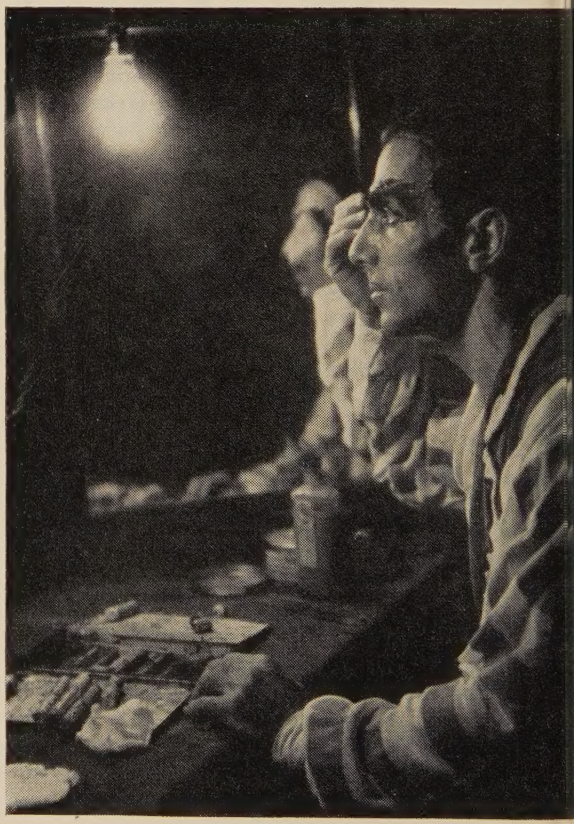
At Covent Garden, on February 6th, such a contact between Leonide Massine and the young English Sadler's Wells Company, resulted in a performance of *The Three-Cornered Hat* which will equally serve to display the genius of Massine, the choreographer, to a new, young and eager ballet public, and the qualities of the Wells company to the old and sometimes sceptical Russian Ballet public. Perhaps more than ever before the Wells now stand on an international plane: they have succeeded in a Spanish ballet, which was created for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and which has been danced by the cosmopolitan De Basil and Monte Carlo companies and the American Ballet Theatre, in almost every country in the world.

And what a masterly ballet they have succeeded in! *Le Tricorne* can stand as an object lesson to young aspiring choreographers of how to construct a ballet. Note the easy and natural introduction of the characters, the build-up to the climax of the Miller's *farucca*, the sudden change of mood to pathos after the arrest of the Miller, and then the steady climb through the denouement of the Corregidor to the glorious, exultant *jota* at the end. In the actual composition of dances, note how different are the movements for the different characters—the passionate, peasant dance of the Miller; the affected and ridiculous movements of the Corregidor; the sunny indolent swaying of the peasants' bodies; and the venomous shooting out of legs by the Corregidor's men. It is Spanish dancing (but for the ballet stage and not the village) and it is character dancing, in the real sense of the term, when all the immense fun and the tears and grotesqueries come genuinely *through* the dancing and are not laid on top of it or conveyed by acting alone between dance numbers.

The Picasso décor, despite the marks that it bears of its wartime life of one-night stands and storage in America, starts pointing morals all round about the difference between real décor (even allowing that this was the work of a genius) and the transference to a backcloth of a flat design by an easel artist. Nevertheless it is a pity that the sandy patina of age on the setting, and the very inadequate lighting, have so mellowed the effect of what should be a scorching whiteness. Picasso's costumes suffer, too, from the poverty of present-day dyes, an occasional blaze of colour giving undue prominence to minor personages.

Manuel da Falla's music can only be described as a perfect ballet score: it is brimful of melody and humour, both broad and satiric, while the rhythms are intoxicating. The final *jota* is surely one of the most exhilarating passages in all ballet music.

In discussing Massine's performance in his original role it seems invidious to question too minutely what toll the years may have taken in speed and sharpness, when the effect is still incomparable. The decline in his powers is infinitesimal: the *farucca* is still electrifying in its rhythm and control, and the tiny dance of



Photograph by Edward Mane

MASSINE MAKING UP FOR "THE THREE-CORNERED

triumph at the Corregidor's discomfiture as entrancing as ever. Massine is the Miller and the Miller is Massine —and Time itself seems to respect the fact.

When one has said that Fonteyn is a shade too well-bred as the Miller's wife, nothing remains but praise for her performance. She dances with remarkable vivacity and beauty, lending her own especial pathos to the lovely, sorrowing dance, when she comes slowly down to the front of the stage, her beautiful arms fluttering behind her. The play of her personality against Massine's gives perfect balance to their long opening scene together, and I cannot remember Fonteyn ever before looking more utterly, bewitchingly feminine.

John Hart's Corregidor reveals an unexpected bent for character dancing which he is developing under Massine's guidance, while in the tiny part of the Dandy Alexander Grant gives a neat, swift and happy performance. For the rest of the company, one may say that they dance better than they ever have before, and their biggest reward must be that they are enabling a new public to see an old ballet in all its remembered glory.

The revival of *La Boutique Fantasque*, on February 27th, made far greater individual demands on the company and, not surprisingly, emerged less perfectly. It was under the additional handicaps of being produced at a time when both Fonteyn and Grey were absent through illness, and the other dancers must surely have felt some aftermath of a long season and a hard winter.

Possibly the real stumbling block, however, was that *Boutique*—although it has décor by a Frenchman and music composed by one, arranged by another, Italian —is essentially Russian Ballet. Both Russian and English dancers may dance in the Spanish idiom and come out equally successful, but the Wells are under as great a temperamental handicap here as the Russians would themselves be in, say, *The Prospect Before Us!*

It seemed as if the ballet had been mounted with so much care and reverence that the effect was that of an old master which has been over-restored, so that details which were never intended to emerge too clearly from the chiaroscuro acquired too much importance. For instance, the various children who should be only background for the dolls upset the balance by undue emphasis, and over-exploit the occasional vulgarities.

The charming Derain setting is in good condition, but (although it is impossible to be dogmatic upon points that depend on nine-year-old memories) the drop curtain seems to have been rather crudely touched up, particularly the faces. Some of the costumes are quite different—the American boy used to wear a dark suit

LEONIDE MASSINE AND MARGOT FONTEYN IN "THE THREE-CORNERED HAT"
Action photograph by Edward Mandinian

Action photograph by Edward Mandinian

JOHN HART AS THE CORREGIDOR, MARGOT FONTEYN AS THE MILLER'S WIFE, AND LEONIDE MASSINE AS THE MILLER IN "THE THREE-CORNERED HAT"

and sailor hat, and the Cossack girl had a different hat and rows and rows of beads that jangled as she danced. Above all, the Cossacks used to wear bottle-green cloth and their chief's blue silk matched the curtains, while he also wore red boots and no beard. Dyes and materials again present a problem, the shiny finish of the girls' dresses being particularly unattractive.

Nevertheless, despite these (often unavoidable) changes, the spirit of *Boutique* largely remains—even if it is a little less *fantasque*. The golden Riviera sunshine still floods the shop, and the light, deft touch of a twenty-three-year old choreographer creating surely, spontaneously and happily, is there. In this ballet, as in *Tricorne*, one marvels at Massine's adroitness in mingling grave and gay—revealing each mood more warmly for its contact with the other. The first brilliant half of *Boutique* (with its wonderfully varied collection of dolls) is the perfect precedent for the sad and hauntingly sweet nocturne, while the gay, almost riotous ending, restores the sunshine and brings the curtain down at exactly the right moment. (Not the least part of Massine's greatness lies in the fact that when he has finished a ballet, he stops.)

Most of the individual dancers were good, and all tried their utmost. After two performances they were already beginning to let themselves go, and when they enjoy the ballet themselves the audience will enjoy it proportionately even more. Farron and Turner start the proceedings with a vivid Tarantella, Henry Legerton (a welcome newcomer from Kirsova's Australian Ballet) gives life to the Assistant, and Michael Somes is gloriously "right" as the Cossack Chief, though his troupe stand in need of more drilling. Rassine's Snob has not quite the necessary wire-spring quality and the walk is one of tiny steps, not strides, but he dances excellently and, when he chooses, gives the best performance of his life. Clayden and Grant as the Poodles could hardly be bettered.

Moira Shearer looks ravishingly pretty as the Can-Can dancer and does her extremely difficult solo well, but she has not the natural warmth and breadth of personality to fill the part and quite misses the sadness of the nocturne. Elegant as her legs are, they are only legs: Danilova's legs could speak. But Massine has always said that "it is not easy to be champagne on the stage" and perhaps we should be grateful to have at least sparkling cider. Massine at fifty-one inevitably lacks the litheness of twenty-one, thirty-one or even forty-one—which was his age when we last saw him dance *Boutique*—and he does not receive the response from his present as from his former partners. It is still a grand performance, but, in this simpler form, the Can-Can is no longer such a crowning glory.

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

LEONIDE MASSINE AND MOIRA SHEARER IN "LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE"

It is encouraging to record how well some of the Wells' own repertoire stood up to inclusion in programmes that contained one or other of the Massine ballets. The return of *Dante Sonata* to the repertoire was a case in point: with Fonteyn, May and Somes back in the roles which have never been more than adequate without them, and with John Hart the best substitute yet for Helpmann, the ballet retains all its previous emotional impact and the patterns of the choreography are infinitely clearer and more beautiful on the large stage.

On January 11th, Beryl Grey and Michael Somes gave their first performance of *Giselle* at Covent Garden. Beryl Grey's is still a well-danced and sincere portrayal and in Michael Somes it seems as if a successor to Helpmann has at last been found. He looks the complete ballet aristocrat, dances very well (it seems worth recording that he performs an excellent *entrechat huit*) and, particularly in Act II, gives a moving interpretation of Albrecht's character. There is naturally room for considerable development of the role which will come with subsequent performance, but on his showing in this and many other parts over the past few months it does not seem an exaggeration to say that, quietly but decisively, Somes is now taking his place among the tiny band of English male dancers who really matter.

Massine and the New Audience

By PAMELA BLACK

MASSINE—a name from that seemingly far-distant past before the war: a name that glitters in the ballet world, not only for its own achievements, but also by reason of its connection with that other great name, Diaghilev; a name that to so many of the legion of ballet lovers that has sprung up during the war, *was* only a name. No wonder, then, at the tense atmosphere of expectancy in the Opera House as the curtain was about to rise on the first night of *The Three-Cornered Hat*. And when it did rise to reveal that slight, vital figure in its first dramatic pose, small wonder at the spontaneous wave of applause that swept through the audience to welcome back Massine to London.

And the ballet itself? That is something of a revelation to those of us who have few, if any, memories of the Russian Ballet. This witty, sophisticated work is conceived in an entirely different idiom from any of the works we are used to seeing, and a more or less fresh viewpoint has to be brought to bear on it.

Yet how delightful it all is—the fiery miller; his saucy, flirtatious wife; her ridiculous old suitor, the Corregidor, so glad to escape for a while from his withered spouse and revel in the lush attractions of the miller's wife. All the characters are alive and gay and charming—even the minor persons, such as the elegant dandy and the village maiden who, momentarily, catches the miller's eye.

We are not just shown glimpses of these characters —somehow or other we seem to be taken right into their lives and shown their little conceits, their weaknesses, and their charms. The married life and relationship of the miller and his wife is revealed in a dozen ways—her flirtings, his jealousy, and their joint, rather malicious sense of humour but, beneath it all, their love for, and sympathy with, each other is clear. The sadness of the wife when separated from her husband, conveyed by a lovely slow, kneeling movement, and a distracted fluttering of her hands, is proof enough of that, and by these flashes of a kinder spirit, the basically coarse and mischievous couple are endeared to us. That, perhaps, is the strength and quality of *Le Tricorne*.

The décor is amazingly simple, yet how effectively it suggests the sun-baked hardness of the Spanish earth, and the flat, almost stark, countryside that softens into beauty with the coming of dusk, while the costumes, if not exactly authentic, are colourful and eye-catching.

A few weeks later came *La Boutique Fantasque*, which we anticipated with equal excitement, but in this, I must admit, I was disappointed. It is difficult to put a finger on exactly what is wrong with this ballet, but something is lacking. I am told that it "needs

Action photograph by Edward Mand

THE FINALE OF THE CAN-CAN IN "LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE". PRE-WAR BALLETOMANES WILL NOTICE THAT MOIRA SHEARER PERFORMS HER ÉCARTEMENT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION

Danilova"—never having seen her it is impossible for me to say, but I do feel that since the female Can-Can dancer is the character on which the ballet chiefly hinges, her personality should be built up a little more.

Perhaps, again, it is because the theme of the work is, in itself, a little dated. I cannot help feeling that we have come rather beyond the "toys coming to life" era, and it would seem to be a significant fact that many of us confess to being infinitely more moved by Frederick Ashton's magnificent *Dante Sonata* than by the vicissitudes of two dolls. Perhaps we should all have ourselves psycho-analysed!

However, there are plenty of things to enjoy in *Boutique*. Derain's dropcloth, décor and costumes are as colourful and gay as anyone could wish: some of the dolls' variations are amusing and original, notably those for the two Poodles, and the Snob and the Melon Hawker, and the children are altogether delightful. The little girl in blue and white, her young brother, and the joyously exasperating mob of Russian children are incredibly well-drawn little characters who well-nigh steal the show by their ingenuous antics, and are, perhaps, the most sympathetic people in it. I cannot help feeling that this is quite the wrong view to take of the ballet, but each time I see it I find my eyes metaphorically glued to the children, fascinated by their infinitely child-like capacity for inelegant mischief—witness their parody, skirts well hoisted up, of the Can-Can.

Massine himself is not given so much individual scope in this work as in *Le Tricorne*, but we cannot but help paying tribute to his choreographic invention, his lovely groupings of colour and line, his masterly handling of large numbers of dancers, and to that exquisite moment when, with the ballerina resting on his knee, he throws out one white hand and then slowly brings it to rest on her hair in a gentle caress, heart-rending in its pathetic, awkward tenderness. From such moments can one recognise the great artistry of Massine and be thankful that here in London we have had an opportunity of seeing him after too long a lapse of time, for to us all, I think, he has brought some idea of the great days of the Russian Ballet and given us new standards by which to judge future productions that we may see.

The Edward Mandinian action photograph on the cover shows Massine in "The Three-Cornered Hat".

PEARL ARGYLE—A TRIBUTE

By FREDERICK ASHTON

I AM both glad and sorry to have been asked to write a few words about Pearl Argyle. I am sorry because her death has meant a very great sorrow to me into which I would rather not have probed: and glad if I can in any way pay a small tribute to her sweet memory.

I remember her first coming in to a class at Madame Rambert's in the early days of my career; simple, dedicated, and unconscious of her great beauty, an exquisite Botticelli angel. She was then so shy that she would blush whenever I spoke to her, so that it took time and patience to gain her confidence.

I think the first ballet of mine in which she danced was *Leda and the Swan*, which was indeed the second ballet I ever produced. But from that moment started an association which remained unbroken through the early days of Ballet Rambert (of which she was the crowning glory) till she left Sadler's Wells in 1937.

I preferred to dance with her than with anybody else for, apart from being wonderfully responsive and unruffled as a partner, she was an inspiration in herself, and one became drunk with her beauty so to speak. She did many beautiful things for me at that time:

DRESSING ROOM PHOTOGRAPH OF PEARL ARGYLE AS THE YOUNG GIRL IN "LE S PECTRE DE LA ROSE"

Venus in *Mars and Venus*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Les Masques*, *Capriol Suite*, *Mephisto Valse*, *Valentine's Eve*, and, at Sadler's Wells, a fairy of haunting beauty in *Baiser de la Fée*, besides many other ballets.

At that time it was my policy, whenever possible, to create opposing yet complementary roles for Markova and Pearl Argyle; it was a perfect partnership—one was a brilliant diamond, the other a flower, and in no ballet was this partnership shown to better advantage than in *Les Masques*. She was a most musical and sensitive interpreter of the roles I created for her, and it was always a pleasure to work for her. She was a great stylist and used her arms and hands more beautifully than any other dancer.

It was a great help, too, in creating a ballet, when those difficult moments arrived—when ideas did not flow easily—to pause and gaze at her serene beauty; for in my estimation she was the most beautiful woman of her generation. As though that were not enough, she was endowed with a reticent though vivid intelligence which, due to her shyness, was not made manifest to everyone. I always found her one of the best critics of my ballets, with an infallible instinct for picking out the weak points: in fact, she was of the greatest benefit to me in making the public accept my work and an inspiration all through the first phase of my career.

How lucky I was, and what pleasure I found in her company. For me she will always be, as Homer says, the rosy-fingered dawn—all that is youthful and fresh. As, later, she went to America and was most happily married, I did not have the pleasure of seeing her growing to maturity. I am told that her beauty increased and that she radiated an ecstatic happiness and grace. Perhaps she was too happy and too beautiful for this world, and it is hard to believe that she will find her peer in any other. I mourn a sweet and loving colleague.

Chabukiani

A LETTER from Iris Morley, now in Moscow, gives the news that Vakhtang Chabukiani, possibly the greatest male dancer in the world today, has left the Kirovsky Theatre, Leningrad, due to a knee injury, and has gone to Tiflis as ballet master. His work was known to us here only through a couple of short films, but even so his quality was unmistakable.

DEBURAU AND THE PIERROT LUNAIRE

By ALAN STOREY

THE advent of Jean-Baptiste Gaspard Deburau towards 1830 at the Théâtre des Funambules coincided with the opening phase in the development of the Romantic Ballet and its attendant evils—the decline of the male dancer and the false division between dance and mime. The Romantic Ballet was not a healthy organism; it was a peripheral attachment to Romanticism, which fed on the popular misconceptions of that movement. Thus, in order to satisfy the sentimentality of its day, it perverted Goethe's conception of the "ewig weibliche" into what I choose to describe as the "Ballerina Myth"; the exploitation of a predominant female element, which eventually brought about the sterility of the ballet at the Paris Opéra and the Maryinsky in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Deburau's art, on the other hand, was both a product of and a contribution to the essential Romanticism; it derived equally from the art of the people, and Noverre's "observation of nature", and from the romantic challenge to the oncoming regimentation of work and thought. Directly and indirectly it inspired Baudelaire and the Symbolists, and was renewed (as a symbol itself) in Rilke's elegies and Picasso's paintings of the rose period.

Until Deburau's interpretation of the part, Pierrot was one of the lesser characters of the Harlequinade—a zany kicked and tricked out of everything, but with a fool's facility in extricating himself from the most awkward situations; temperamentally he was a mixture of gamin and village idiot. Deburau changed both the character and his appearance. The short woollen tunic of his predecessors, with its great buttons and narrow sleeves, was discarded for the now familiar ample calico blouse with its wide, long sleeves. He removed the collar, which cast an upward shadow from the footlights on to his face, and, instead of the white conical hat, he heightened the pallor of his features by wearing a tight black cap.

Gautier, who had so damnably banished the male element from the ballet of his time, hailed its debut at the Funambules with equal fervour. "Deburau enlarged and widened the rôle of Pierrot", he writes; "it ended by occupying the whole piece. Under the flour and tunic of the great actor Pierrot assumed the airs and aplomb of a master . . . he no longer received kicks, he gave them . . . he caused the entire action of the piece to revolve around himself, and he attained such a degree of insolence and audacity that he would beat his own good genius". But master, like servant, is mortal too; the old escapes were not always possible, the new responsibility led as often as not to suicide or to death on the sword of conscience. The comic element remained, but it was no longer funny. No doubt an Easterner finds much to amuse him in the character of Hamlet; but we are too closely identified with that character to laugh at ourselves. By turning Pierrot into man, Deburau invited tragedy among the equilibrists and vaudeville turns of the Funambules. Daylight succumbed to the unnatural pallor of Night. In this lunar setting he moved, in Baudelaire's words, "pale as the moon, mysterious as silence, supple and mute as the serpent, lean and long as a pole".

Disease, and the emulation of disease, played an important part in forming the external appearance of Romanticism; women of the Directoire period, starved, drugged, and dampened themselves into a consumption—and young men committed suicide—in honour of the Byronic and Goethean myths. Deburau's lunar appearance owed much to the ravages of cardiac asthma.

PHOTOGRAPH OF DEBURAU BY NADAR, 1846

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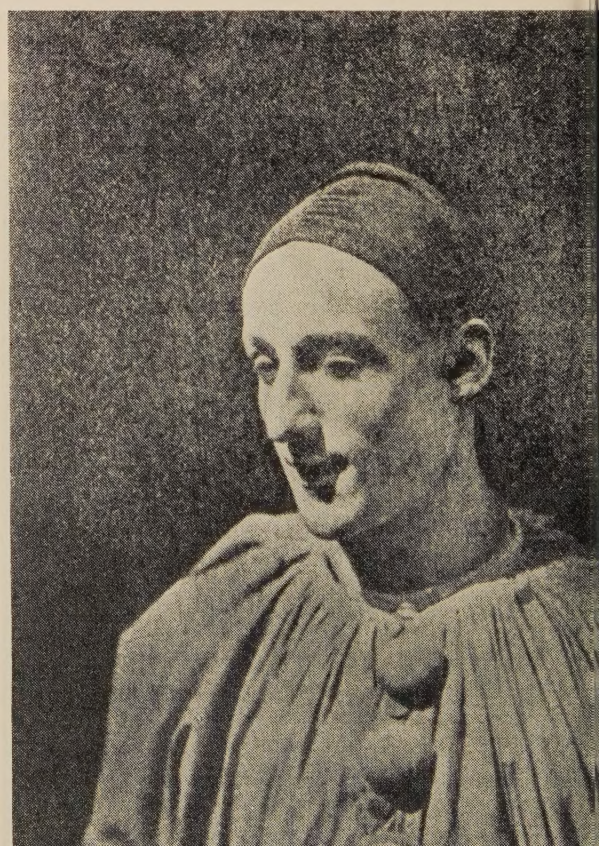


Janin's description of his features—the tightened lips, drawn nostrils and sunken cheeks—is merely a catalogue of symptoms.

Deburau's mimetic, caught and reproduced for us now by Jean-Louis Barrault, is a salutary lesson to the actor-dancer, and a key to the interpretation of at least two major parts—the Pierrot of *Carnaval* and *Petrouchka*. In the first place it is based on traditional mime, the mime of Pylades and Noverre. The familiar gestures for "Love", "Mother", "Marry", "Beautiful", "A long time ago", and so on, remain; for the rest, each gesture and each movement result from hours of experiment and the study of human motives, presented with apparent spontaneity. The greatest effects are produced by under-emphasis and inner struggle. Pierrot, I have inferred, is no longer a type, he is a man—Romantic Man. He is cunning, lovable, malicious, sensitive to beauty, mean, superficially successful, inwardly frustrated, inviting pity and turning it into derision. With what subtlety are they given homogeneity! "Acteur sans passion, sans parole et presque sans visage; qui dit tout, exprime tout, se moque de tout, qui jouerait, sans mot dire, toutes les comédies de Molière", Janin wrote, in what is almost a prose poem.

(*Top right and below*) JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT AS DEBURAU IN THE FILM "LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS"

Indecision and introversion, the essential weaknesses of the part, are expressed by the crouched body, the bent knees, and the protective attitudes of the arms with their weeping sleeves. Fokine's choreography for his Pierrot derives from this fundamental attitude. If one examines *Carnaval* closely it is to discover that the ballet revolves round Pierrot and not Harlequin, as is generally supposed. The principal reason, perhaps, why this ballet never comes to life when revived these days. It is the introverted and ambitious Pierrot, not the extroverted and assured Harlequin, who is the real enemy of the Philistines; a little persuasion and Harlequin would be on their side. For myself, I have never seen a true "Pierrot Lunaire" in *Carnaval*—but then I never saw Bolm. The character I see is simplified out of recognition, sentimentalised as a pitiable type; no more than a butt for ridicule. And it is so with Petrouchka; the doll, or his pitiable soul (scarcely worth the saving), is emphasised to the exclusion of all else. Barrault on his barrel outside the Funambules is the *real* Petrouchka, a potential man to be kicked and to kick in his turn.

When the disease which hitherto had aided him revealed itself as death, Deburau was acting in *Les Noces de Pierrot*; never before had he reached such heights of sublimity. Champfleury, the author of many of his mime-plays, describes the scene:—

"Ordinarily Deburau would now execute one of these eccentric dances, the secret of which died with him; it was a mixture of the steps of the Directoire and of the more audacious steps of the can-can. More than ordinarily affected, his heart too full of joy, Deburau did not dance.

" 'The chahut'! cried a rough voice.

" 'No, no'! replied the whole theatre.

"The most vulgar of publics has its moments of exquisite delicacy. It had understood the emotion of the great comedian.

"Towards midnight there was a great gathering at the stage-door. Deburau came forth. He had preserved, no doubt through a presentiment, his white bridegroom's posy. It was the posy of his nuptials with Death.

"A thousand voices shouted: 'Vive Deburau'! But Death was in haste to embrace her pale bridegroom".

Before he died, a few days later (1846), Deburau gave his son Charles a lesson in the art of mime. It is a lesson greater than the moment for all interested in the ballet theatre. I use Sacha Guitry's paraphrase of Champfleury's description of the scene, from his "Deburau":—

"Now, remember this. Play light, and be simple; be sincere, but not trite. And never try to be—or seem—too clever. What you mean, when you do it, must be perfectly clear. And it must seem perfectly clear what you're *going* to do. The audience must always feel sure of you, but, when you do it, it must seem spontaneous. . . . Always do what comes most naturally to you. Now; the ordinary gestures, 'Yes, sir' and 'No, sir', you can't go wrong with those. When you express something more elaborate; first *think* it right. If you want to convey 'What a pretty girl' think it and do whatever comes into your head. If it's madness or love, or fright, or pleasure—delirium even—*think*, think *hard*, and think *intensely*. Then, when you can't keep still any more, when your feeling becomes too intense to bear—steep yourself in it for the millionth part of a minute, then . . . let yourself go. Don't copy me, don't copy anyone. And each time you play a part, add something new; while, if there's something you don't feel is so good—get rid of it. Remember, Art is a continual renewal".

"Et du Pierrot blafard brisant le masque étroit,
Le front de Deburau perçait en moint endroit".

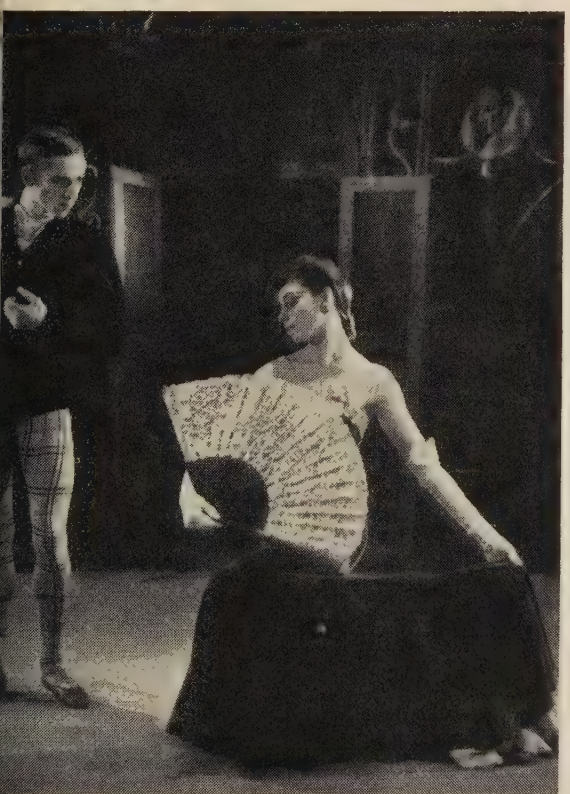
Editorial Comment (continued from page 3)

I did succumb utterly to Pavlova, the dancer, but my acceptance of her as a goddess alongside my own two divinities, Karsavina and Spessivtseva, has always been perhaps a little grudging. Thanks to Madame Rambert I have at last seen her in the right perspective. I know these are personal reactions, but I do not want to write too much on the lecture itself because I hope very much that arrangements can be made for it to be heard by a wider public. Perhaps this might come within the scope of the London Archives of the Dance (who, incidentally, gave their fourth film show on March 31st).

Regarding the Negro Dunia, this was a strangely exhilarating and moving experience. Very wisely, no attempt was made to theatricalise them. They were dances which the natives of Nigeria still dance, some of them being over two hundred years old. There was no question of judging the performance either by Western or by professional standards; the dancers were not specially trained; some of them were not, one imagines, even particularly accomplished. But they were dancing something which was very real and living to them, and they communicated this to their audience. No question of "technique" arises, but one noticed particularly the remarkable development of backs and shoulders and a strong, forward-thrust of the upper part of the body, and, above all, how completely unsexual is the hip swaying which characterises almost all these dances. I believe that with a minimum of theatrical presentation (just sufficient to make a smooth running performance while adhering absolutely to authenticity), these dances and songs would have an appeal to a general audience. P.W.M.

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

DONALD BRITTON, CELIA FRANCA, ALAN CARTER, PAULINE WADSWORTH IN "BAILEMOS"



Photograph by Edward Mandinian

"Bailemos" and "The Haunted Ballroom"

WHAT is there to say of a ballet for which the choreographer disclaims any attempts at authenticity, but which is danced in pseudo-Spanish style, with an inexplicable cross-section of *Prince Igor*, to pseudo-Spanish music (Massenet's *Le Cid* ballet music), in pseudo-Spanish costumes (by Honor Frost) in front of a décor (also by Honor Frost) which looks like a rejected design for a stand at the "Britain Can Make It" Exhibition? I saw no reason for any of it unless it was to prove that Spain is really a democratic country after all, since at the end the nobles and peasants all danced round together though keeping strictly to their own class as regards partners. Such is *Bailemos*, Celia Franca's new ballet which had its first night at Sadler's Wells Theatre on February 4th. I should have felt sorry for everyone concerned had it not been for the gusto and skill with which they all set about their various balletic chores, and the uproarious enthusiasm with which their efforts were received.

The Haunted Ballroom is an efficient revival by the Opera Ballet of an old favourite dating back to 1934. It was haunted for me by memories of the youthful Markova and Helpmann of those days when this seemed a very important ballet indeed as, historically, it certainly was. Alan Carter now inherits the famous dressing-gown, and wears it with the same quiet authority with which he invests the character of the Master of Tregennis, and it is not his fault that the Dance of Death remains an unconvincing piece of choreography. June Brae lacks Markova's impalpable lightness as the alluring Ghost, though she dances well and looks entrancing in the first scene. For the first time Young Tregennis is mimed by a boy, with the unfortunate result that Frank Ward, who normally looks a sturdy twelve-year-old, suddenly turns into a sadly overgrown Little Lord Fauntleroy.

The directors of this Company are up against a difficult problem which does not at the moment show signs of being solved satisfactorily. It is obviously impossible to build a new repertoire overnight, neither is there any guarantee beforehand that a new work will necessarily be a good one, though an overseeing, experienced eye at rehearsals might prevent some mistakes; but it is unfair to expect these young dancers, many of whom are already more than promising, to satisfy in reproductions of so many ballets which have too strong an association with a period in the history of English Ballet which is already over and done with. One can only feel pity for the gallant efforts which are made in vain.

P.W.M.

IVO CRAMÉR AND THE SWEDISH DANCE-THEATRE

By J. T. BROCKWAY

LAST autumn, ballet lovers all over Holland experienced a new delight. The Swedish Dance-Theatre toured the country.

This company was formed towards the end of 1945, in Stockholm, under the joint leadership of Birgit Cullberg and Ivo Cramér, two brilliant pupils of Kurt Jooss, and after playing to audiences in Stockholm, re-toured in Norway, Denmark and Holland, but has yet to visit England.

Here in Holland, these Swedish dancers danced before enraptured audiences not only in the large towns of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, but also in the small provincial towns and in the isles of Zeeland. Everywhere they went, whether to the plush-seated city theatres or to the chilly wooden-benched halls of the outlying towns, they were received with the same warm response and the same eager tributes to their art. Everywhere audiences realised that they were witnessing something quite unique, and it was these words that Jooss, himself, used to pay them his own tribute, whilst one critic said that Holland had seen Jooss and his *Green Table* and scores of other ballet companies, but had never in recent times seen any European dancers who had climbed to the heights these Swedish dancers had scaled.

How wonderfully the company justifies such praise cannot be told by words alone. The eye must see and judge for itself. However, ballet lovers in England, who have not yet had the opportunity to judge (and enjoy) for themselves, will want to hear something about this company's work.

It is small, consisting of under twenty dancers—yet, when required, the choreography can seem to fill the stage with multitudes; there is no display of magnificence, the magnificence lies in the art of the dance itself; no scenery; no glittering costumes—though the costumes designed by Alvar Granstrom, who draws from all parts of the world and all ages, beautifully complement the choreography; no props, and no orchestra. The company dances on a bare stage, against a plain backcloth, and is accompanied by two pianists. It has no need for stage trappings, for it possesses a genius of the dance whose inspiration can fill the stage with a life no trappings could achieve, and whose vision creates a world where these things fall away into their proper insignificance, and become unnecessary.

On seeing him and his work, I was convinced at the outset that in Ivo Cramér the company and the dancing world had found a new genius. Unlike many modern artists, he is no particularist. His subject is man, himself, and he presents not merely one isolated aspect of him; not man in some limited environment, some topical situation, wrestling with one or another particular problem of life; but a whole vision of man. Man in his pride and his humility, his cruelty and his compassion, his mocking disbelief and his tender devotion, in all his splendour and all his weakness. Man in his entirety, the eternal human being. And he does this with an understanding, a tenderness, and a skill that it is the rarest of delights to behold. In this, apart from his many other and obvious gifts, as a dancer, an actor and a choreographer, his true greatness lies.

It is the art of Cramér, despite the brilliance of all the other work of the company, which calls up the word "unique" to our lips. And in a repertoire which always holds us spellbound, it is his work, reaching its peak in the ballet *Bible Pictures*, which leaves us breathless and silent. When at the close of this ballet the curtain comes slowly down on his tragic picture of Golgotha, the audience sits on in silence, reluctant to return from the world of beauty created before its eyes to the shabby unreality of the auditorium.

Ten years ago, when still a boy, Cramér was already making dance studies of biblical characters, and now these early seeds have germinated and blossomed into a glorious flower of achievement. In seven scenes he depicts the manger, Herod raging in his palace, the slaughter of the babes, the flight into Egypt, the Sermon on the Mount and the betrayal, Peter's denial, and the ultimate Golgotha. In his hands mime is transfigured into one of the great arts. The human body, in its rhythmical movement: the glance of an eye, the quiver of a nostril, the curl of a lip, the gesture of a limb, the trembling of a finger, the stamp of a foot, is employed to tell a story that we feel only the body could tell.

Christ never appears on the stage, yet he inhabits it with an emotional force no actual presence could achieve. He is there, the babe, in Mary's gently cradling arms, in the tenderly worshipping eye and swelling throat of Joseph. He stands in an aura of light on the mount whilst the multitudes listen below,

and his crucifix rises up, gigantic, from the theatre stalls, whilst before it the soldiers jeer, mock and insult, and Mary, John, the disciple, and Mary Magdalene (with another unknown, unnamed woman, forlorn in the background, seeming wonderfully to represent the grief of all mankind), bend to the earth in desolation as the curtain falls on their superbly grouped picture, one of the many with which the artist enriches his ballet.

No words and no photographs will be able to convey the exquisite beauty of this choreographic poem. Cramér, himself, explained with a telling humility: "I wanted simply to tell a story. It is not a religious sermon, but the life of a man who was the son of a simple peasant woman".

As he stood there, quietly talking, short and slight, I wondered what wizardry was his that he could have been that Herod, that tower of terror and fury, rising like a giant from his throne to rage through the halls of his palace; a wizardry that could, at the same time, create the tender humility and love of Joseph and Mary, which contrasts so dramatically and so nobly with the vivid ferocity of the soldiers and the sneering arrogance of the Pharisees. A wizardry, too, that could turn aside from the grave beauty of this retelling of the world's most famous story, to create *Patience*, a deliciously humorous trifle about a tailor and his long-suffering customer, the innocent fun of Aesop's fable of the rivalry between the Sun and the Wind, and the rollicking polka of the Swedish country bumpkins.

English audiences must see this dancer. Then they will know why it is said of him that he is the natural rival to Jooss. Though there will be many who will surely see that, like every true artist, he stands apart, beyond comparison, in a world of his own.

Three Special Lectures

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GRACE ROBERT, whose article on the New York Ballet Season appeared in our last issue, and whose "Borzoi Book of Ballets" is shortly to be published in England, will be giving an important series of three lectures in London on "Ballet in America", arranged by the Sulgrave Manor Board. The audience will be an invited one, but all those who are interested should write to the Secretary of the Sulgrave Manor Board at 37 Charles Street, London W.1. These lectures will take place in May and early June.

IVO CRAMÉR AS HEROD IN "BIBLE PICTURES"

IVO CRAMÉR AS THE APOSTLE JOHN IN "BIBLE PICTURES"

A PERSONAL REFLECTION UPON DRAWING THE BALLET

By GUY SHEPPARD

With sketches from his notebooks

BALLET as a subject for his brush has always attracted the painter, even if it has nearly always defeated him; but never so much as at the present time when, culture having become fashionable in suburbia, drawings, paintings and photographs of the ballet have reached almost the proportions of that industry attendant upon the reputations of the films. It is, however, only by concentration upon a limited facet of the subject that a painter's success has usually been achieved.

Generally, while the painter's final picture may be a beautiful study, portrait, or composition, it seems to imprison the dancer in a leaden frieze; yet it is probable that the scribbled notes which he made for it, jostled and uncomfortable in the wings, will contain all the vitality and clarity of the moment's perception, and will, in fact, give a much more truthful statement of the dance.

These notes have, of course, always been of interest to publishers, as, for instance, the delightful caricatures of Cocteau or the sketches of Larionov or Segonzac, or more recently the magnificent drawings of Bouchène. But from the personal shorthand arises a spate of scribbling which the present lack of restraint has made a fashionable style. It is true, of course, that these sketches develop a fascination of their own. What may start as a means to an end becomes an end in itself; and, to introduce here the personal note, I must hasten to class myself among the scribblers, for it was as a means to an end that I found myself in the wings at Covent Garden in 1937.

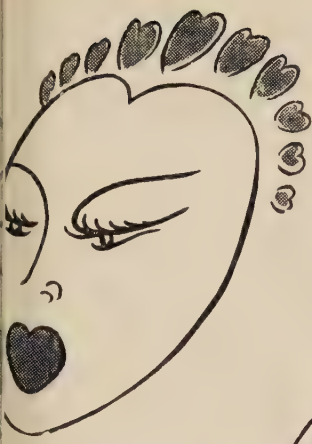
In that year the designs for a couple of "projected" ballets (how many of these dear, forlorn, dream children must lurk forgotten in dusty corners of studios) were the object of a brief, disillusioning, but encouraging interview with Colonel de Basil himself. Having tactfully refused the ballets, Colonel de Basil suggested that it would be valuable to me to gain more knowledge of "costumes in motion", and in order to do so I was given permission to go backstage for the rest of that season and any subsequent seasons his company might play there to make sketches and notes.

Though at first I concentrated strictly upon the ostensible issue of the assignment it was not very long before I began to feel the fascination of drawing dancers as an exercise in itself; and probably my mildly sceptical scientific background (I started life as an engineer-chemist) and a rather over-developed and esoteric sense of pattern led first of all to a series of caricatures which were exhibited at the Cooling Galleries in 1939.

Faces, however, if not unnecessary, are hardly the most important of dancers' features, and it gradually became apparent to me that the real excitement of drawing ballet lay in the possibility of expressing those idiosyncrasies of bodily movement peculiar to each dancer and choreographer. In fact it should be possible without a portrait face or label to know that such a drawing depicted X in a ballet by Y. It is a difficult goal, and I should be the last to know whether I have succeeded.

It is helpful to get to know the dancers' figures so that one can draw them almost by heart, and in a familiar ballet one also knows at what moment the desired pose is coming up: but even so, one needs considerable concentration directed towards the holding of the image, which lasts perhaps less than the fifth of a second, until one has put it down. It is obviously not a photographic method, for in order to make this statement in so short a time everything unessential must be eliminated and it is probable that this process of immediate selection is the secret which gives these drawings a greater truth than those re-composed from memory in the studio.

Because of the fierce concentration involved, drawing ballet in the wings is surprisingly exhausting, but like gambling has the fascination that every failure demands a new attempt. One of the difficulties is that of disassociating oneself from the emotional pull of the music, which will probably be very strong at the moment of some particularly exciting pose. On the other hand, this is counter-balanced by familiarity with the ballet, knowledge of what comes next. Drawing in class, however, needs even greater awareness, since a good teacher will rarely repeat her *enchaînements*. Here the dancers are shorn of all glamour, movement is pure, music is unemotional, and the whole occasion partakes of the same discipline as must be observed by the draughtsman. It is, in fact, an extension into movement of the "life class", and is even more stimulating. In the same way that a dancer needs to be in training, I find that one or two weeks of discarded scribbles must pass before one begins to get even the slightest satisfaction from one's drawings.

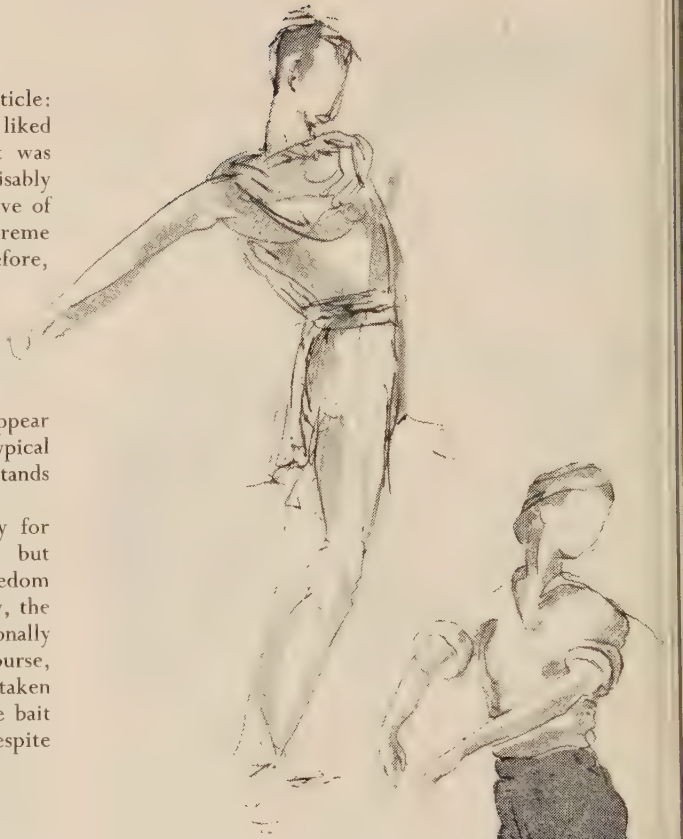


I have tried several methods of attack: pencil, charcoal, pastel, drybrush, but I find generally that the severe limitations of pen and wash are the most satisfying, since the range can cover the lightness of a sylphide or the solidity of a Petrouchka coachman. But, as one finds that every work dictates its own style, for the Ballet Theatre, with its rather looser American exuberance, the freer, more emotional line of direct brush drawing was more effective.

Perhaps after several arduous weeks there are a dozen drawings that bear scrutiny—most times the dancers look surprisedly at a meaningless hieroglyphic and wonder why one is allowed—then these, and the excitement there has been in making them, repay one for the hundred frustrations: the darkness that descends on one's drawing as the spotlights concentrate on the most exciting solo: the waiting dancer who breathes down one's neck, bangs one's elbow, kicks the inkpot into some inaccessible corner of the proscenium—for one is really an interloper: the sudden obliteration of the critical pose by a misplaced chorine or the outsize hat of a rival artist more fashionable or more pushful: the choreographer appalled at the conductor's oblivious tempo, stamping his desperate quicker rhythm upon one's inextricable foot. These moments, however, occasionally worth storing in one's memory, are the natural hazards of the chase.

It was not easy to select sketches for this article: there were so many reasons why one would have liked to put in this or that favourite sketch; but it was necessary to choose sketches which were recognisably characteristic and, at the same time, representative of the various phases touched upon. The supreme Danilova, the wonderful Baronova, must, therefore, appear as caricatures, Dolin in *Le Fils Prodigue* (pencil), Grigorieva in *Coq d'Or* and Sono Osato's unforgettable shoulders represent 1939; Frank Staff, individual in his own *Tales of Hoffman*, Margot Fonteyn, classic in class, and Vera Volkova, most stimulating of all "victims", appear for the middle period: Michael Kidd, in a typical moment from *On Stage* (direct brush drawing), stands for the American invasion.

A position on the sidelines and the necessity for close observation, makes one an acute critic, but watching ballet does become a purgatory of boredom unless rewarded by those moments of pure beauty, the very ecstasy of movement, which occur only occasionally with even the greatest dancer. They are, of course, impossible to capture because one is always taken unaware, and rendered helpless; but they are the bait which takes one back to ballet again and again, despite experience, always hoping for a new revelation.



THAT INCONSTANT RAPTURE

By PAUL TASSOVIN

CAN one ever efface the memory of an entrancing experience? Can one ever outlive the first taste of a delectable rapture? Indeed, is one not apt to be forever prejudiced by the first time of any poignant experience? Pondering the impression of soured unmellowness that certain performances of ballet have recently left upon me, I ask myself these questions. And, looking back over the great ballet experiences of my life, I wonder how much of the lustre that remains with me is due to hallowed memory that fancifully matures with time. And in comparison how much the art of ballet has fallen below the standard of pre-war days.

In the three remaining capitals where art and fame are still permitted to flourish, and be appraised, I find only remnants today. Disintegration has been going on for a long time. The mighty atom of ballet was split before the war began, and during the course of the war it split and split again into manifold fragments. Consequently it is hard to find anywhere a sufficient measure of that intrinsic essence that engendered the divine rapture of yore. Gone are most of the great lights of the last three decades, and withered are many of Terpsichore's remaining emigrants from the soil of Russia.

Here in England during the dark years that thankfully lie behind us, the light of ballet was valiantly kept alive, though sometimes with what dim flutterings, by Sadler's Wells and Ballet Rambert and some half-dozen or so less impressive ventures, which, remarkably enough, built up a whole new enthusiastic if somewhat gauche and uncritical public for ballet art. Probably it was inevitable, however, that the initiated audiences of the 'twenties and 'thirties should find these efforts a thin and watery substitute for the glories given us by Diaghilev, Blum and de Basil. And quite naturally those balletomanes of long standing have during the last year looked forward to a return to former standards. I fear, like me, they found that the legend of memory has not returned, as we hoped it might. Until now, that inconstant rapture has evaded us.

Ballet, like politics, seems to become more and more national, and with this tendency it deteriorates and loses all inheritance to greatness. A great art cannot thrive in fetters. It must have freedom from commercial caprice. A great art cannot germinate from business acumen, nor wax strong on the personality of one talented artist; nor can it spring to maturity from the vaults of a bank. Talent, discipline, money—these are necessary to make an organisation for culture, but to achieve immortality there must be added something else.

Today it would appear that there is no font or spring at which the youthful genius may drink and thrive. There is no background upon which he may find the integral histrionic perspective of his art. Events point to the drying up of all sources of inspiration. One notices a discarding of tradition, and a tendency towards flippancy, frivolity and hysterical flutterings. The charlatan invades the shrines of ballet's past glories, while Youth cries: "Away with tradition! Give us noise, dope, and more noise! Pile on vulgarity! Give us entertainment, novelty, abnormality, give us something new". But the tangents into modernism so far seen are empirical and neurotic caperings that will, I hope, disappear overnight in a cloud of disgust.

I think that we should realise that we live amongst ruins. In an age of decadence we should not delude ourselves into thinking that our little prefabricated fanciful fit-ups are monumental wonders. So much clap-trap is written and talked about ballet today. In this time of makeshift and subterfuge there is altogether too much hoodwinking of the public. The other day in Oxford Street I saw a man selling £1 notes for a shilling each. I was flabbergasted at the number of fools who flung away their shillings for a piece of worthless paper. "Just as gullible as the present ballet public", I thought to myself. Assuredly there are more counterfeiters and quacks thriving in ballet circles than in any other art. It is pitiful that so few are qualified to judge.

All in all, I suppose one may say that the present babel of mediocrity, vulgarity and emptiness is the distressing psychological reaction from a period of severity, destruction and spiritual hopelessness. A devastating reaction that may last over a period of years. However, no tragic event is without its lighter side; even now one may see some faint gleams of hope despite the disheartening realities of the present arid parturition of choreographic invention. From the Elysian fields of Paris came recently one youthful troupe of enthusiasts who give promise of the "divine afflatus". A troupe that in its infancy offers an abundance of crude yet rich material, that might with the smile of fortune soar to aesthetic heights. But one wonders rather woefully from where shall come the mighty leader to pilot these children through the whirlpools and rapids of commercial racketeering? Yet who can tell? In their innocence they may tread fearlessly where tougher giants have tumbled.

But perhaps the brightest gleam of hope lies in Leonide Massine, who at the age of fifty-one, and after seven years in America, returns without a trace of

(*Continued on page* 28)

"LA SYLPHIDE". JEAN BLANCHARD AS GURN, TUTTI ENDERLÉ AS EFFIE'S MOTHER, NATHALIE PHILIPPART AS EFFIE, AND ROLAND PETIT AS JAMES

Photo—
B. M. Bernand

"LA SYLPHIDE" IN PARIS

By HANS WILD

THE revival of Filippo Taglioni's romantic ballet, *La Sylphide*, by the Ballets des Champs-Elysées during their recent season in Paris, has been a tremendous success and a personal triumph for Nina Vyroubova in the name part.

The remounting of the original performances has been extremely careful, and although no exact notation was recorded, a contemporary description of the ballet gave detailed accounts of the dances on which Petit was able to base his choreography.

The sets by Serebriakoff follow the original designs remarkably closely, although the vast cleanliness of the farmhouse interior of the first act tends towards Scottish baronial in style. The woodland scene of the second act is a beautiful realisation of a romantic set, and is completely successful in capturing the mood of the ballet.

The ballet opens with the hero, James, sleeping before the fire whilst La Sylphide kneels beside his chair, a scene made famous by the lithograph based on the Lepaulle painting. From the moment of one's first glimpse of Vyroubova, her wraithlike beauty dominates the ballet.

The first act shows the overpowering fascination of La Sylphide for James, who deserts Effie, his fiancée, to rush away after her. The dresses in this act are very gaudy and Scottish, fresh and earthly by comparison with the wistful white tulles of the second, and the slight sophistication of the Bérard costumes was greatly appreciated by the Parisian audiences.

In the second act there is a series of *pas de deux*, elaborate, but without obvious, glittering fireworks, in which James dances with La Sylphide, until the curse of Madge, the malevolent old witch, causes her death

CHNO, LEPRI,
RARD AND SERE-
AKOFF EXAMINING
E MAQUETTES FOR
A SYLPHIDE"

Photo—
Lipnitski

and she fades away in the arms of her lover. Vyroubova is exquisite in the tragic scene in which she loses her wings, and her fragile, wistful acting perfectly recaptures the spirit of the romantic ballet—her arms are especially wonderful, and her ethereal bearing is allied to an effortless technique.

The original idea of alternating Skorik and Vyroubova as La Sylphide and Effie had to be abandoned owing to Skorik's illness, and Philippart now dances Effie, not always entirely at her ease.

In scenes requiring mime, the company is not too happy, and at the beginning, after La Sylphide has vanished into the fire and James wakes his friend Gurn to describe his vision, it is impossible to understand Gurn's reactions. Another instance; where Effie has been jilted, she has an admittedly impossible task to show, all within a few moments, surprise, anger and despair, before being reconciled to Gurn's proposals, but it is a pity that these moments are so completely lost. There are times when the clear cut mime of the Wells' company would be welcome.

The *corps de ballet*, increased for this ballet, consists of wild individualists impervious to discipline, and although on a good night they point up the wonderful dancing of Vyroubova, on a bad one they cause chaos.

It is entirely Vyroubova's ballet, and she completely justifies its revival, but Petit is a most satisfying partner and makes the *pas de deux* in the second act extremely moving. The finale of the first act, where James and Effie dance at their engagement festivities and La Sylphide gradually distracts him to the consternation of the guests, ends as a brilliant *pas de trois*. There are, however, no *enchaînements* quite so satisfactory as those in *Giselle*, and the book has more obvious drawbacks; but the idea of reviving this work shows intelligence and courage, and the result is infinitely more satisfactory than many ballets spawned during the past decade.

POSTSCRIPT ON "GISELLE"

By GORDON SYMES

LAST summer, London ballet-goers had the unusual opportunity of seeing five different productions of *Giselle*—still considered the *Hamlet* of ballet—of comparing notes and, perhaps, revising opinions. Some people may be chiefly interested in grading the respective ballerinas, but this series of productions also underlined some aspects of *Giselle* which are more problematical.

Giselles may be graded, but there has never been the same interest in Albrecht. Now this is a much better part than Siegfried or Prince Charming, having at least some semblance of individual character and, in the second act, a great deal of good dancing. This dancing, moreover, is significant and an integral of the story; it is not the routine interpolation which gives the ballerina a breather. In fact, if we turn to the original German legend of the *Wilis*, from which Gautier started, Albrecht appears to be, dramatically, the central figure of this act, being the unlucky male caught unawares at their sinister convocation and forced to dance until he dies. It is Albrecht who quickens and imposes dramatic content upon what might otherwise be a timeless dream of Sylphides. There have always seemed to me to be tremendous balletic possibilities in this conception, which somehow neither the music nor choreography have fully exploited. This episode ought to be the artistic climax of the act—a creepy undertone and unearthly crescendo. But we are nearly always disappointed. One wonders wistfully what Perrot, *l'aërien*, made of it in 1842. Of the London performances, perhaps only Algaroff conveyed something of the clockwork agony of that last variation. (Hilarion, in the same plight, is prohibited by the conventions of character-mime—and, perhaps, those boots—even from dancing at all, although the plot demands it. No company seems to have found a satisfactory way of disposing of *him*.)

The trouble with Albrecht is that history has treated him very shabbily. Miss P. W. Manchester (*Vic-Wells: A Ballet Progress*) says that nothing can hide the fact that he is a "supreme cad, a sort of Bassanio of Ballet", and that, to palliate this, most dancers "overdo the agony of remorse to an alarming, not to say embarrassing, extent". But is he such a bounder? We have no reason to suppose that his love for Giselle was not perfectly genuine nor that he might not have called off the aristocratic *mariage de convenance* with Bathilde, if Hilarion had not precipitated the issue. There is no evidence, internal or external, to show that he was merely trifling with Giselle, although in the acted version at the Theatre Royal, Sadler's Wells, in 1841, described by Kathrine Sorley Walker in *Ballet* (October, 1946), a happy ending bestows Giselle on Hilarion and Albrecht returns to Bathilde.

At any rate, this convention has resulted in most Albrechts staying on the defensive in Act 1 and reserving themselves for the much more rewarding portion to come.

This is characteristic, in a way, of the relationship of the first act to the second. Sometimes it seems to have no other function than to set the scene for Act 2—a sort of theatrical prologue or programme note. The *Wili* legend itself requires no first act. Both acts are self-contained and sharply distinct from each other in atmosphere, period and dramatic structure. At only one point in Act 1 is the next act foreshadowed at all; that moment of Greek irony when Giselle's mother warns her of a *Wili's* fate. But this moment, if not omitted, is often so slurred as to be unintelligible. The fact is that it is extraordinarily difficult, within the framework of mime, to convey such a complex statement. We have to be content with a few head-shakings and a sign of the cross.

Act 1 has a great deal of this dialogue-in-dumbshow, the kind of mime Lifar would call "conventional" rather than "expressive". That is, narrative passages of mime which are independent of and substituting for dance (unlike Act 2, where dance and mime are integrated). The allegorical (and, nowadays, out-moded) vocabulary employed does seem to strike a discord, and Lifar actually says (*Ballet: Traditional to Modern*) that this kind of mime is as illegitimate as the use of speech, and instances the "awful discordancy" of a certain ballerina who used to shriek in the mad scene!

It is Act 1 which taxes our "suspension of disbelief" most hardly. In Act 2, once we have accepted the initial legend, the rest follows. (The "wires" of the new Sadler's Wells production strain us a little, perhaps. They seem to have been part of the original production, admittedly, but there is really no reason why the *Wilis* should fly. The myth requires them only to rise from their graves and dance, which is, after all, a completely satisfying balletic hypothesis. Such devices seem out of keeping with the aims of Romanticism, which had put dancers "on the point" to create exactly that illusion of movement through space. To do this by extraneous means seems as fatal as the introduction of the human voice.)

Very few modern Giselles show anything like the

Action photograph by G. B. L. Wilson

LICIA ALONSO AS GISELLE AND ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY AS ALBRECHT IN THE 1946 BALLET THEATRE PRODUCTION AT COVENT GARDEN

same felicity in this act which they achieve in the second. Yvette Chauviré's performance in Lifar's production particularly illustrated the difficulties of this act. Her short *tutu*—fatal to "style-atmosphere"—her authority and technical domination of the stage made nonsense of such scenes as her shy humility before Bathilde. Later, again, Giselle must change her rustic simplicity for the highly stylised, melodramatic and protracted histrionics of the mad scene. Such transitions, as well as the larger transition to the plane of Act 2, are considered the supreme test of the ballerina, of course, but she can hardly be expected to do justice to a part so illogically compounded. Either Giselle is slightly fey, haunted and obsessed with dance and causing her mother grave misgivings, in which case the mad scene follows, but not the rather awkward coquetry of the flower-scene, for instance; or else she is a gauche little peasant, in which case her madness ought to be childishly pathetic, but not in the grand manner.

Albrecht's problem in this act we have already examined. The fact that he must recruit our sympathy later, in a role both lyrical and poignant, puts him in a considerable fix in Act 1, where he has been branded with a sort of commercial-traveller morality. On this score, the understatement and pensive quality of Eglevsky's mime in the Ballet Theatre production (though some critics regarded this as a deficiency) did help to suggest a man haunted with inner conflict.

Hilarion (inappropriate name) has the hardest time of all. Yet he is in reality the most natural and identifiable character in the story. He is in love, has a not unreasonable grievance and hopes only to recover Giselle from what he considers an unprincipled deception. He is in no way responsible for her death and his remorse is as authentic as Albrecht's. (All of which makes his summary fate in Act 2 seem particularly unfair.) The fact that no-one can make much more of this human and sympathetic character than a mid-Victorian burlesque is a significant reflection on the conventions of mime in which he is strait-jacketed.

It is difficult not to feel that the weaknesses of this act result from its preponderance of narrative mime. Conversely, the strength of Act 2 lies in its high content of pure dancing, which is not mere *divertissement* dancing for its own sake. At any rate, the juxtaposition of these two acts strengthens the feeling that ballet technique is less suited to the pantomimic representation of particulars than to a generalised expression of emotional atmosphere. This is precisely what Act 2 is doing; it dances emotions for us—

(Continued on page 31)

BALLET IN BERLIN

By MURRAY N. FRIEDMAN

BERLIN is, by any standards, a devastated city. The lights of Kurfürstendamm are dim where there are any buildings still standing to be lit. The city is wretchedly cold. The Germans have brought this upon themselves it is true and are paying bitterly for it. Nevertheless, despite hardships which would cripple a less durable art, dancing continues.

German Ballet is quite unlike that of the United States, Great Britain, France or Russia. The influence of Laban and Mary Wigman is far more potent than Petipa's or Fokine's. Mime is of primary importance and German audiences seem to prefer themes that will take them out of their present unhappiness.

First, a word about the physical handicaps under which ballet must operate. The food ration is just adequate for the average citizen. Dancers, however, who must take classes and rehearse and perform, find it quite inadequate, and are frequently too weak to carry through an entire performance. Then, too, the rehearsal halls and theatres are quite cold, so that the muscles simply refuse to become limber. Finally there is a lack of the most basic materials. Toe shoes for pointe work, textiles for costumes, tights for practising, even full scores for the ballet music are almost impossible to acquire. That ballet continues in Berlin is a tribute to the faith of the dancers and the enthusiasm of the audience.

The principal theatres now presenting ballet in Berlin are the Städtische Oper and the Staatsoper, both with a long tradition of permanent companies. The original opera houses were casualties of the bombing, but other theatres have been pressed into service. Performances at the Staatsoper have by far the higher standard of the two.

At Christmas time, the Städtische Opera House presented its most ambitious production to date, *The Legend of Joseph (Josephslegende)* to music by Richard Strauss, with choreography by Jens Keith. The text, by Harry Graf Kessler and Hugo von Hoffmanstahl, follows the familiar story quite faithfully. Potiphar (Jens Keith) and his wife (Liselotte Köster) sit in their gorgeous tent, unmoved by the passionate dance of Sulamith (Lils Herbeth) or the fight of the boxers. Two slaves bring in a hammock in which Joseph, wrapped in a shepherd's cloak, is sleeping. He awakens, and dances an ingenuous and pious dance. Potiphar's wife is warmed from her cold aloofness, whereupon Potiphar becomes jealous and breaks off the festival.

The next scene shows the boy asleep on a couch in the palace. Potiphar's wife enters, watches him and falls down beside him, attempting to kiss him. Joseph turns away and in her sudden hatred she orders him chained and tortured. As he stands before the hangman, deep in prayer, she feels his power once again. His chains fall off and he disappears, while Potiphar's wife strangles herself with her chain of pearls.

Although Liselotte Köster is superb as Potiphar's wife and Gabon Orban is a creditable Joseph, I could not help feeling this was a waste of effort and precious materials. It is not ballet, but a play in mime. I must add, however, that this prejudice was not shared by the audience which was most vociferous in its approval.

Tatiana Gsovsky, wife of the well-known choreographer and teacher, Victor Gsovsky, is the guiding force behind the dancing at the Staatsoper. What she has been able to do with the limited facilities at her disposal is little short of inspiring. Herself handicapped by lack of food and the all-pervading cold, she has taken the small budgets available to her and produced things of taste and imagination. Fortunately she is able to count on a gifted German-born Russian ballerina, Natacha Trofimova, of whom more later.

For the current season, Frau Gsovsky has presented *The Arrow*, *Nobilissima Visione* and *Petrouchka*. Music for *The Arrow* is by Fried Walter, a young German composer, well known for his operas, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Andreas Wolfius* and *Village Music*.

The arrow, symbol of death and love, strikes a shy bird. When the bird is lying, beautiful and helpless, in the hunter's hands, the arrow rebounds and hits the hunter's own heart, inflaming it with ardent love for his dying victim. Gisela Deege, formerly of the films, dances the enchanted bird, while Frantisck Karshanek is the hunter.

Nobilissima Visione, a dance composition, was finished by Hindemith in 1937 with the words "In Nomine Sancti Francisci". The subject of the ballet is the three commandments of monastic life: chastity, humility, charity.

In the first scene, Voluptas—Sensuality—the youth, Franciscus, beautifully danced by Gert Reinholm, seeks to grasp the essence of love. In the midst of bacchanalian dances, Woman, tempting and dangerous, appears to him. He is saved from temptation by his celestial vision (Nobilissima Visione), and stripping off his crown of blossoms, symbol of earthly marriage, Franciscus vows himself to chastity.

The second scene is titled Vanitas—Pride. Franciscus is ambitious for power. He dreams of proud armies and, not unlike the Tower of Babel, a visionary building, symbol of earthly power, is growing round him. Then, obedient suddenly to the reminding

voice of the Nobilissima Visione, he destroys the building and devotes himself to humility.

Caritas—Charity—is the theme of the last scene. Franciscus's heart burns with the desire to take upon himself the sufferings of man. His Nobilissima Visione is at last united with him.

This ballet, really a passion play in the dance idiom, is strangely moving. Notable in their characterisations were Sybill Werden as the Vision, Natacha Trofimova as Vanitas and Rolf Jahnke as Death.

Working with a small stage, Frau Gsovsky has re-choreographed and produced a memorable *Petrouchka*. Rolf Jahnke and Michael Piel are excellent as Petrouchka and the Moor respectively, but it is Natacha Trofimova as the Dancer who brings the whole thing to life. This is especially strange in this particular ballet, where the title role is so central. Miss Trofimova, by far the outstanding classical dancer in Germany, is the Berlin-born daughter of Russian emigrés. Still in her early twenties, she took her early training with Eugenie Eduardova-Lewitan, and during the war with Frau Gsovsky. She has danced all over Germany, becoming especially well known for her work in *Aschenbrödel* (*Cinderella*), and in April, 1946, became prima ballerina of the Staatsoper. Her clean line and faultless technique, added to her youth, promise much for the future.

Frau Gsovsky has laid out an ambitious programme for the year ahead. She is planning a ballet to Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, another set to Bartok's *Les Mandarins*, and a third to *Les Goyescas* by Granados. The modern German composer, Werner Egk, has written the music for a fourth, a ballet on the theme of Faust.

Photograph by Walter Weitzer, Berlin

NATACHA TROFIMOVA

International Ballet

INTERNATIONAL Ballet started a six-week London season at the Adelphi Theatre on March 11th with a performance of *Coppélia*. With them, as guest artists, for the next few months, are Nana Gollner and her husband, Paul Petroff, who are sharing the classical roles with Mona Inglesby and Jack Spurgeon. These include *Coppélia*, the new full-length production of *Swan Lake* (with décor by William Chappell), and a revival of the fourth act of the Petipa ballet *La Bayadère* which dates back to 1877. Nana Gollner was seen in London before the war both with the de Basil and the Blum companies, and in America is considered their greatest classical ballerina. Paul Petroff is also well-remembered as one of the best known members of the de Basil Ballet, being particularly esteemed as an outstanding partner. On the first night illness prevented Miss Gollner from appearing, and Swanilda was danced by Mona Inglesby. A review and photographs of the season will appear in the next issue of *Ballet Today*.

Photograph by Gordon Anthony

NANA GOLLNER

COPENHAGEN'S BALLET

By J. CLIFFORD KING

NEAR the famous fish market, which is held along the quaysides which line Copenhagen's little canal, there is the Thorvaldsen Museum, a building vaguely in the Egyptian style, housing a large collection of the Danish sculptor's statuary. His work is in the larger-than-life classical tradition, and—it must be confessed—rather dull. Thorvaldsen, himself, living in the early nineteenth century, travelled extensively in the Mediterranean countries, and was friendly with the Frenchman, Auguste Bournonville, the father of the Danish Ballet. It is said that Bournonville made a ballet in which the statuary of Thorvaldsen came to life—no mean achievement, if true. It is more likely, however, that the influence of Thorvaldsen upon the ballet in its formative years consisted mainly in the importation of ideas for ballets based on Spanish and Italian themes.

Bournonville came from a dancing family: before succeeding his father as ballet master at Copenhagen he had danced in Paris with Taglioni and his aunt was dancing in Vienna.

Until 1805, when the younger Bournonville took over in Copenhagen, the ballet there had been a mere adjunct to the opera, as it was to remain in Paris and elsewhere. Auguste Bournonville, however, was given a free hand and virtually re-organised and reformed the theatre. The growth of the Danish ballet tradition, with which his name will always be associated, dates from that time.

Today the discipline of that tradition is apparent in every production. Ballets by Bournonville are still performed. The dancing studios attached to the Royal Theatre still give instruction to the children who come there which is based on the master's theories.

A certain insularity may be detected, an inability to escape from the classical dancing, but, in this, there is also strength. Add to it the fact that all the dancers on the stage dance as an ensemble and the feeling of poetry about it—the Hans Andersen poetry which seems to be so much a part of Danish life, and characterises their theatre too—and you will have some notion of their quality.

Subsidised to the tune of over one million Danish crowns every year, partly from the government and partly from a culture fund, the Royal Theatre has few financial worries. It has no worries about its public. A system of block booking ensures full houses and makes it very difficult for the visitor to obtain a seat for any performance at all. And the King of Denmark appears to be a devotee of the ballet and is usually in his box for every new production.

New productions are very frequently put on. Yet—but this is not so extraordinary as it would seem to be at first—the familiar ballets, known to ballet enthusiasts all over Europe, are scarcely known here.

Danish composers write the music. An exception is Konstantin Konstantinoff, perhaps: he might be a Russian; but he has been working with the Copenhagen theatre for some years. The choreography is by Danes—much of it by the present ballet master, Harald Lander, and a new work has been done by Viggo Cavling, who worked as a journalist on a Copenhagen newspaper.

The most ambitious production this season has been *Fugl Fønix*, choreography, in collaboration with the composer, by Harald Lander. The music was composed by Knudåge Riisager, and formed a dramatic, strongly rhythmical accompaniment to the work. The theme was a contemporary one: the phœnix-like hope arising from its own ashes.

The principals: Margot Lander, Copenhagen's prima ballerina, as the Phœnix, Børge Ralov as the young man, Svend Eric Jensen as War, Gerda Karstens as Evil, and Knud Henriksen as Crime, are used to point the drama which is played out in the dancing of the *corps de ballet*. There is little solo work, as such—the use of principals and *corps de ballet* together resembling the treatment of a similar theme in the pre-war de Basil production of *Les Présages*.

The dancing, needless to say, reaches a consistently high standard: if the theme is somewhat pretentious, the team work and the intelligence of the choreography make it impressive. It is danced throughout. There is no mime, no stamping feet, no striking of attitudes.

The décor, however, leaves much to be desired. There are six scenes in *Fugl Fønix* which, unfortunately, do not improve as they go on. The designs are crude and the colours brazen.

This would not matter so much, perhaps, were the fault not noticeable in other productions at this theatre. The designs for Stravinsky's opera, *The Nightingale*, by another artist, were, if anything, worse.

It seems a thousand pities that the other excellences should be marred in this way.

otograph by Mydtskov, Copenhagen

MARGOT LANDER (KNEELING) IN "FUGL FØNIX" BY THE COPENHAGEN BALLET

THE MOSCOW PRODUCTION OF "ROMEO AND JULIET" SHOWING THE DISCOVERY OF JULIET (ELENA CHIKWAIDZE) AFTER TAKING THE POTION. (TWO MORE PICTURES ON THE NEXT PAGE)

"ROMEO AND JULIET". THE BETROTHAL IN FRIAR LAURENCE'S CELL. GALINA ULANOVA AND MIKHAIL GABOVICH WITH ALEXEI BULGAKOV AS FRIAR LAURENCE. BULGAKOV IS SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD.

"ROMEO AND JULIET".
ULANOVA AND GABOVICH IN THE FAREWELL SCENE

The photographs on this and the preceding page show three scenes from the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, revival of "Romeo and Juliet". An article on this ballet will appear in the next issue of "Ballet Today".

That Inconstant Rapture (*continued from page* 19)
weariness to resurrect some of his masterpieces for Sadler's Wells Ballet. At the first night of *The Three-Cornered Hat* Covent Garden's vast audience was roused to spontaneous enthusiasm by the reappearance of that long-lost spirit, and by the zest and animation with which the dancers of Sadler's Wells rose to the occasion. Mr. Massine in a brief curtain speech said that the occasion brought back to him "many happy memories". I could say no less. The event is surely the most heartening thing that has happened to English ballet since its inception. One sees in it an augury! May we not hope that, coming as a guest, the greatest living choreographer may be persuaded to stay longer, and to create some new enchanting works further to enrich the progress of Sadler's Wells? And may this be only the beginning of great events which shall not end until England has become the new Mecca of Ballet Art.

Let us in this instance invoke the Muse to send an attendant spirit, since attendant spirits are fashionable, to watch over and guide the fortunes of that inconstant rapture where'er it may roam.

Jan Cobel's Anglo-Polish Ballet

Recently returned to this country after an absence of several months in the Far East is Jan Cobel's Anglo-Polish Ballet, a company which claims the distinction of specialising in ballets based on national themes, and which was created during 1940 primarily to carry on the traditions of the "Balet Polski".

Of the major selection of works of the Anglo-Polish Ballet, *Cracow Wedding*, *Pan Twardowski* (Polish *Faust*), *Peasant Weekend* and *The Cow that Spoke*, the latter ballet is perhaps the most interesting. The choreography, by Jashf Crandall and P. Thornton, is based on a series of simple but effective folk-dances, with a slight plot taken from a Jugo-Slav play, the music being a brilliant orchestration by Gordon Jacob of unfamiliar folk tunes from Jugoslavia. Although this presentation provides considerable amusement for most audiences, and a dreadful headache for the orchestra, until such time as this company can retain a nucleus of regular performers in its orchestra to lead the respective sections, in this and all other productions the performances will be aesthetically unsatisfactory.

As a choreographer Helena Wolska might be complimented on her eight minute divertissement entitled *Clair de Lune*. It is the only production in which the dancers appear to pay heed to timing. With Debussy's impressionist music, it rivals a painting of Monet or Cézanne in its power to evoke effects of light and colour.

Although the piquancy and colourful gaiety of the folk-music which is the basis of most of the dancing of the Anglo-Polish Ballet provides a pleasing contrast to the more polished music of the classical ballets, too insistent a use of such simple music must inevitably bore an audience, once its shallowness and occasional vulgarity have been discovered.

There is a distinct tendency on the part of the dancers to forget that music is an integral part of the ballet, and to regard it merely as the necessary rhythmical accompaniment to their dancing. They appear also to make alterations *ad lib.* to the choreography without considering that this upsets the essential relationship between the music and the dancing which originally existed, and unless this company, which boasts sixty artistes, fifteen ballets and twenty-five divertissements, completely reorganises and refreshes its repertoire with basically sound material it can never hope to raise itself from music hall level to the more distinguished latitudes one associates with ballet. Jan Cobel must realise also that to crowd a stage with stamping, hand-clapping, swirling dancers, to the accompaniment of an undisciplined orchestra excessive in the use of the trombone and timpani, does not necessarily constitute ballet, not even the robust ballet of Poland.

GEOFFREY HANDLEY-TAYLOR.

BALLET PROGRAMMES—A READER'S SUGGESTION

To the Editor.

Dear Madam,

May I ask for the hospitality of your columns to plead for an overdue improvement in the standard of ballet programmes.

The vast majority of our audiences are sufficiently well versed with the story of familiar ballets such as *Giselle* or *Swan Lake* to render as detailed an account as is contained in the average programme, superfluous. Whether we have previous knowledge of the plot, or not, it is surely unnecessary to be spoon-fed, and told every detail, such as that Giselle "tries once again to dance as she did so joyously for Albrecht", while it is both possible and more satisfying to discover this for one's self.

It would therefore appear to be better if the narrative part were restricted to a minimum, and replaced by an annotation which would concentrate on an appreciation of the work as a whole, or any of its three major components. It could also give the historical background together with the reasons for any changes and innovations, which may have been made in the current production. Choreographer, designer or composer could add separate notes. It might even be amusing to print an appraisal of *Les Sylphides* written by Sir Percy Scholes and Mr. Haskell, on alternate copies.

A carefully prepared programme could be a powerful means of broadening the balletomane's interest, as well as adding to the evening's enjoyment, instead o merely irritating.

I realise that I am touching a source of revenue to companies, but am convinced that the ballet-going public would willingly pay the extra price to receive what may be a welcome addition to any library, instead of a tatty piece of paper, serving mainly as a vehicle for even more tatty advertisements.

I am, Madam,
Yours faithfully,
KEITH HENLEY.

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Balletomane's Bookshelf

THE NEW BALLET: KURT JOOSS AND HIS WORK. By A. V. Coton. (Dennis Dobson Ltd. 35s. net.)

In this book Mr. Coton explodes the doctrines of our balletic pundits with the calculated zeal of a militant nonconformist. As an intellectual examination of the inherent nature of ballet and its relationship (actual and potential) to the other arts and to life itself, his monograph cannot be too highly estimated—for undoubtedly it is the most important study of its kind to be published during the last two decades.

Hitherto, the reality of Jooss's choreographic genius has been carefully ignored by the balletomane critics; or, at the best, dismissed in oblique and uninformed references. On the other hand, more rubbish has been said about Jooss by dancers and non-dancers than about any other supreme artist of our time—with the possible exception of Picasso. Mr. Coton's book is the corrective.

In brief, the author claims:—

That Jooss's philosophical conception of Ballet, and the works arising from that conception, constitute the greatest revolution that the art has yet undergone.

That Acadamic Ballet has passed through "all the calculable mutations that its theatrical formulas will permit".

That the ballet of the future (if there is to be one), can only evolve when the "mutation which is embodied in the dance philosophy of Jooss has penetrated right through the structure of contemporary theatrical dancing".

That a complete development of ballet is unthinkable without recourse to a system of dance notation, such as the "Kinetography Laban".

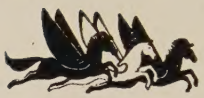
The monograph itself consists of six chapters, of which the second and third—a survey of the growth of Labanism and the Ballets-Jooss, and the gestation period in Stuttgart, Munster, and Essen, made with scholarship and a complete grasp of the intellectual and historical backgrounds—are possibly the most interesting. There is less clarity in the analyses of the philosophical and pseudo-philosophical reasoning underlying the Laban-Jooss dance system, with its distracting jargon. But this is understandable to anyone who has frequented Jooss's own lectures, or who has made some attempt to understand the schism which now exists between the doctrines of the two men as a result of Laban's disinterest in the theatrical dance. One is reminded, somewhat uncomfortably, of Wagner's philosophic pronouncements on the Music-Drama.

On the whole, I think that Mr. Coton ties Jooss too securely to Laban. Jooss's development has been *from* rather than *with* the philosopher. It is also worth noting that Jooss has produced little of importance since his revised *Prodigal Son* (I disagree that *Pandora* is an important work: it shows no advancement from *Chronica* or the *Prodigal*). Perhaps Jooss himself provides the explanation in his observation that he has reached the boundaries of dance-drama in *Chronica*: "beyond", he points out, "lies 'Wagnerism' ". Mr. Coton makes no mention of the proposed *Cross-Roads*, abandoned at the outbreak of war, or of Jooss's belief (persistent throughout the war) that his next step might lie in the direction of "abstract" dance.

A further point: valuable though Jooss's philosophical and aesthetic theories undoubtedly are, the general public must judge him as a ballet-maker. I would like Mr. Coton to expand his observations, arising from a description of *The Big City*, on Jooss's use of spatial relationships, and his experiments in pattern and dance figuration, because I believe that, above all, the greatness of the man lies in the imagination and invention apparent in his creative designs.

The author has been well served by his publisher. This book is a work of art in its own right: a joy to look at, to read, and to think on.

ALAN STOREY.



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P.W.M.

Postcript on "Giselle" *(continued from page 23)*

cruelty, pity, longing, despair. Here, incidentally, is the case for abstract ballet.

Act 2 could, in fact, stand alone. It has theatrical unity, perfect "style-atmosphere" and internal dramatic justification. Albrecht would actually gain in nobility if we first met him at his desolate vigil by the grave. Giselle herself would lose nothing in dramatic intensity, since her crowning glory is that she must hover, in this act, between the lunar heartlessness of *Wilis* and her still warm human sensibility.

This is not to suggest, however, that *Giselle* should be bisected in this way. *Giselle* cannot mean anything other than the two-act ballet which bears its name. In 1945, Mme. Rambert did produce the second act by itself, but as she has since given it in full, her reasons were doubtless different from those suggested above. The truth is that ballet-lovers will always feel affection even for the flaws of Act 1, which in any case is musically excellent and has some interesting choreography, such as the vine-gatherers' dance. But *Giselle* does exemplify clearly the whole problem of dramatic expression and characterisation in relation to dance, a problem still unsolved, though it is at least as old as Noverre.

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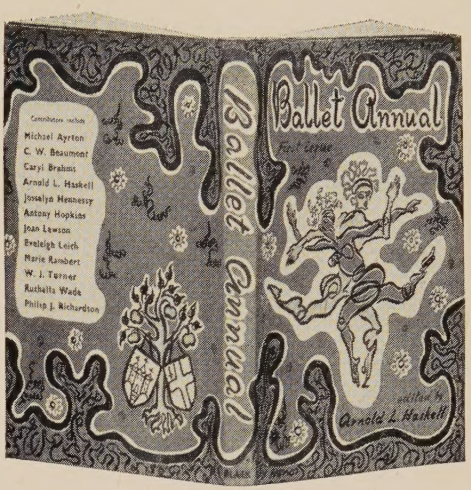

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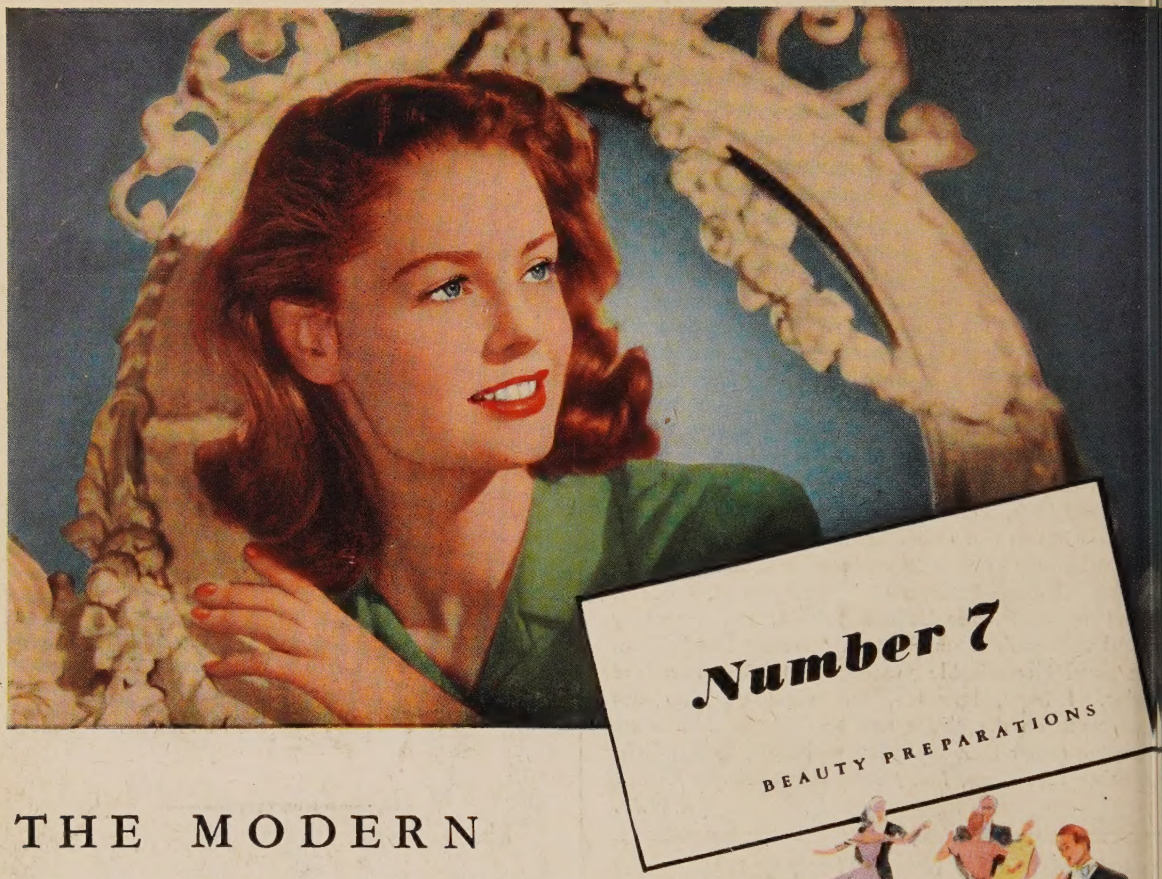

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